

THE VICARS OF LAUGHARNE. Rev. John Palmer (vicar), 1427. Alan Percy (rector); John Palmer (second vicar), 1535. John Evans, 1591 - 1618. William Thomas, vicar of Laugharne, 1644 or 1645 ; Bishop of St Davids, 1681 ; Bishop of Worcester, 1684. George Owen - Michael Owen, 1684 or 1689. William Lloyd, died 1706. Thomas Phillips, 1707; 1748 died. Edmund Sandford, 1748; died, 1790. Thomas Watkins, 1790; died, 1799. John Williams, 1799; died, 1829. William Daun Harrison, 1830; died, 1834. Jasper Nicolls Harrison, 1834.

William Thomas, Bishop of St Davids, just mentioned, it was who let the ancient vicarage of Laugharne go to ruin, which stood in the field by the church gates. (See the account of it in Part VIII.)

While he was vicar of Laugharne, a company of cavalry in the service of the Parliament visited the town. They asked whether the popish vicar was still there; whether he continued reading the liturgy, and praying for the queen? One of them said he would go to the Church next Sunday, and if Mr. Thomas dared to pray for that ^1 he would certainly pistol him. Information of the threat having been conveyed to the vicar, his friends earnestly besought him to absent himself. Thinking that would be a cowardly deviation from his duty he resolutely refused.

When he began his duty the soldiers placed themselves in the pew next to him. When he prayed for the queen, one of them snatched the book out of his hand, saying, with a coarse expression, 'What do you mean by praying for that---? ^1' meaning Henrietta, the king's wife. Mr. Thomas bore the insult with so much Christian meekness and composure that the soldiers who had been guilty of it shrank away ashamed and confused. He continued the service, and gave an excellent discourse with great spirit and animation.

On his return home he found the soldiers waiting to beg his pardon, and desire his prayers to God on their behalf. The Parliamentary Committee soon afterwards deprived this resolute pastor of his living.

On the Restoration of Charles II. he was rewarded for his brave loyalty; appointed Bishop of Worcester. He faithfully served Church and State in this See until the Revolution of 1688, when, refusing to take the oath ^3 of allegiance to William III., he would have been turned out of his See had not his death intervened to spare him this indignity. His objections to the oath were conscientious, and could not be overcome."

In a letter to a friend, he says: If my heart do not deceive me, and God's grace do not fail me, I think I could suffer at the stake rather than take this oath." I have obtained this account of Rev. W. Thomas from 'Curiosities of the Pulpit,' by Rev. Prebendary Jackson. It is surprising that Mr. Thomas should hesitate to take this oath, or could be so blind to the miseries and dangerous state James II's policy was bringing on the country, and that any faithful Protestant clergyman could uphold a popish sovereign.

A letter exists of Archbishop Sancroft to Mr. Thomas in 1683, in which he complains of a custom then prevailing and continued long after, of having a sermon preached in the nave of a cathedral while the prayers were read in the choir. It arose from there being no sermon in the parish churches. In a letter to a friend, he says: "If my heart do not deceive me, and God's grace do not fail me, I think I could suffer at the stake rather than take this oath."

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^1 He meant the Queen Henrietta, Charles' wife ; called her by a very ill name.

^2 He was a non-juror

^3 Pub. by Hogg and Son, York Street, Covent Garden.